

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 ARA-10 PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15
ACDA-12 AGRE-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00
STR-07 AID-05 IO-13 /117 W
-----069059 031307Z /42

O R 031200Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4667
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS REGARDING CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA:
BULGARIA

REF: USICA 09797

1. MOST OF THE IMPRESSIONS OF BULGARIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD
PRESENT SITUATION IN AFRICA DESCRIBED BELOW ARE BASED ON COMMENTS
BY A FEW UNOFFICIAL BULGARIAN CONTACTS OCCASIONED BY THE RECENT
ASSIGNMENT OF THE EMBASSY'S POLITICAL/ECONOMIC OFFICER AS
PRINCIPAL OFFICER IN LUBUMBASHI. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE BULGARIAN
COMMENTS WERE HONEST AND SOMEWHAT CANDID, SINCE THEY WERE SOMEWHAT
PERSONAL. THEY MAY ONLY REPRESENT A SMALL SLICE OF OPINION.
WE OFFER THEM WITH THIS CAVEAT. THE SUBJECT HAS NOT COME UP IN
MOST OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS. RESPONSES PARAS 2-6 BELOW
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ARE KEYED TO QUESTIONS A-E PARA 1 REFTEL.

2. A. SOME BULGARIANS PRIVATELY ACKNOWLEDGE ROLE ATTRIBUTED TO
CUBANS IN WESTERN PRESS, ASSUMING THAT OFFICIAL BULGARIAN MEDIA
ARE UNDERPLAYING AND "INTERPRETING" EVENTS. THEY DO NOT CONDEMN
CUBAN ROLE; THEY SIMPLY VIEW IT AS A FACT IN PRESENT EAST/WEST
RELATIONSHIP.

3. B. THESE BULGARIANS SEE IT AS WESTERN INVOLVEMENT (OR, FOR OFFICIAL CONTACTS, "INTERFERENCE") IN AFRICA. AT SAME TIME, THEY APPEAR TO FIND WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR UNDERSTANDABLE, CONSIDERING OUR INTERESTS INVOLVED, AND EXPECTED WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND APPEAR TO BE ABOUT TO DO (PARIS CONSULTATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE).

4. C. SOME SEE SOVIET ROLE AS SIGNIFICANT AND GROWING. SOME EVEN SAY THAT THEY SEE AFRICA AS COCKPIT WHERE THE SOVIET UNION IS TESTING THE US AND THE WEST AT THIS TIME. THIS IS, HOWEVER, PROBABLY NOT THE GENERAL VIEW.

5. D. NOT ENOUGH BASIS TO COMMENT.

6. E. SOME BULGARIANS ARE CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF US-WESTERN/USSR FACE-OFF IN AFRICA FOR OVERALL PROSPECTS FOR DETENTE - SALT, MBFR, ETC. THEY PERCEIVE THAT A GENERAL WORSENING OF THE CLIMATE BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR WOULD MAKE IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO PURSUE WITH THE US BILATERAL MATTERS OF VERY PRACTICAL INTEREST TO THEM, SUCH AS AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION, PERHAPS EVENTUAL MFN, EXCHANGES, ETC.
GARTHOFF

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SOFIA01047
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780232-1140
Format: TEL
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780699/aaaadhio.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2749be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2501130
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: QUESTIONS REGARDING CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA: BULGARIA
TAGS: PINT, CG
To: ICA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2749be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014